

HONORING BERT STEPHEN CRANE

**HON. JEFF DENHAM**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 29, 2011*

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and honor the life of a beloved leader in the Merced community, Bert Stephen Crane, on his 80th birthday. Bert was born in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley's fertile lands of California on November 29, 1931. He is the fifth generation of California farmers and ranchers that came from Connecticut during the Gold Rush of 1849. His ancestors can be traced to John Alden of the Mayflower landing in Plymouth. A true son of this great country.

Growing up on the cattle ranch he learned that the day starts in the saddle before dawn, and it doesn't end until all the work is done and the horses are grained and rubbed down. A cattle sale has always been done with an honest handshake.

Bert loves music and was the Drum Major in the Merced High School Band, and played basketball. At Menlo College, Bert enjoyed roping and polo. He later studied at Stanford University and U.C. Davis, where he achieved his Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Economics. During these years, he fell in love with a young gal, Nancy Magnuson, who was studying at Stanford University. They married in 1957, raised three children and have been married for over 54 years.

Bert's life has been a great and wonderful adventure. His leadership skills have extended from achieving his Eagle Scout as a young man, to the highly coveted Distinguished Eagle Scout Award, which is a recognition award of outstanding service to scouting and the community awarded at the National Scouting level. He has ridden horses with Ronald Reagan, coached Little League and shipped his Registered Red Angus bulls to Europe and Hawaii. He diversified from the beef business in the early 1970s and started farming walnuts as well. Eventually, he built a walnut processing plant with his wife, Nancy and three children, Bert, Mary and Karen. His children and seven grandchildren are following the tradition of ranching and farming.

Bert's step-father was James Parker, M.D., a third generation family doctor. James' love for the outdoors was a natural match for Bert, as they enjoyed fishing and duck hunting out on the family's Sunrise Ranch. Bert has always had fond memories of loading up horses, and packing into Hetch Hetchy reservoir, and Davis Lake for trail riding and trout fishing together.

His passion for quality healthcare was learned through his stepfather. Bert has served and led fundraising events for Mercy Hospital for over 36 years and spearheaded the building of the Mercy Cancer Center, and a new state-of-the-art Mercy Hospital in Merced. Bert's wife, Nancy, was the founding president of the Mercy Hospital Volunteers and has served for over 40 years.

In 1986, Bert was honored by the University of California, Davis Alumni with the Distinguished Achievement Award for his involvement in research in the University's agriculture and governmental programs, along with his community and industry associations.

His service to his community, agriculture and research is one of great respect and in-

tegrity. Bert served on the Merced County Planning Commission for 28 years. All of this would not have been possible without the work of his loving wife, Nancy, in keeping the home fires burning and taking care of the children while supporting his passion for service to others.

## REMINISCING WITH BERT

The year was 1943. The place was the Sunrise Ranch of local pioneer C.A. "Bert" Crane, located just off the old Gustine Highway. A young cowboy was growing up on this ranch; he was named Bert, after his grandfather. Well, all ranches have dogs and this was no exception. One of Bert's chores was to feed the dogs.

To digress a moment, Grandfather Bert had a best friend, Bill Moffat, of Manteca Beef fame. One of Moffat's employees named Scotty Allen, convinced him that it would be good business to use the scraps from the beef plant to make dog food. The result: Scotty Allen dog food. To promote the sale of this product, the cans were wrapped with coupons . . . . Being loyal friends, the Cranes served up nothing but Scotty Allen. As young Bert fed the dogs he fastidiously peeled the coupons off the cans and sent for the catalog of prizes. When the catalog arrived, Bert searched the pages and finally selected his prize: a fabulous crook-neck Boy Scout flashlight. Mother Crane cautioned that Boy Scout flashlights are for Boy Scouts. This saddened Bert, for the chances of becoming a Scout out there "in the boonies" were remote. However, after some soul-searching he sent for the flashlight.

Soon after, Bert and his family moved to town. Bert packed up his flashlight, and the family settled across the street from Applegate Park. As good luck would have it, there in the park stood the log cabin Boy Scout hut. Bert quickly joined the Scouts and legalized his flashlight. Bert was twelve; his Scout troop was #101; the leader was Scotty Langley. Langley became Bert's mentor and guided him along the journey to the coveted Eagle Scout Award. His first merit badge was for Horsemanship; his second badge was for Steer Production, and he could tie more knots than the Scout handbook. Three years running Bert won the Merced-Mariposa Trail Ride, Junior Division.

Bert was a member of Rancheros Visitadores and enjoyed going on the week long trail ride with friends and politicians in the Santa Ynez Valley. One of his friends was the late Governor of California and United States President, Ronald Reagan. Bert was visiting with the then past Governor and seized the opportunity to take a rope off of a saddle and "lasso" Reagan in the outhouse. Reagan thought that Bert was going to flip over the outhouse. Reagan opened the door a couple of inches and worked the knot out of the rope and undid the knot. Reagan came out laughing, stating "You know Bert, I've been in tighter places than that."

The following is a list of his service and awards:

Member of Central Presbyterian Church  
Bank of America Advisory Board 1957–1969  
Bank of America Plan to Prosper Comm. 1967–1968

Bank of America Livestock Symposium 1969–1970

Merced Land Bank Assoc. 1980–1988

Merced County Land Bank Assoc. 1984–1988

Diamond Walnuts Top Twenty Service Walnut Grower 1983

Speaker at U. C. Davis 1973, Livestock

Speaker at Fresno 1985, Livestock

Speaker at U.C. Davis 1987, Livestock

U.C. Davis Alumni Achievement Award 1986

Merced City-County Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Livestock Produced for the year 1976

California Farm Bureau Member

California Cattlemen's Assoc. 1954–1988  
Research Comm. 1968–1970

California Cattlemen's Assoc. Farm Credit Policy Comm. 1984–1988

California Cattlemen's Assoc. Land Use Comm. 1984–1988

Merced-Mariposa Cattlemen's Assoc. 1954–1988, Director 1964

American Quarter Horse Assoc. 1954–1988

American Simmental Assoc. 1969–1970

National American Cattlemen's Assoc. 1970–1988

Beef Health Conference Comm. Davis, California 1968

Livestock Research Advisory Board, Davis, California 1970

Pacific Slope Red Angus Association

California Beef Cattle Improvement Assoc. 1965–1988, President 1978–1980, Director 1966–1970

Rancheros Visitadores Member 1978–1988

Beef Improvement Federation

Commendation for Excellence for Feed Stock Breeder 1974

Cattlemen's Expo Member of Formation Comm. Representing Red Angus 1968

Red Angus Association 1951–1988:

Registration Comm. Chairman 1964–1968

Board of Directors 1962–1971

President of Assoc. 1969–1971

Top Hand Award 1972

Red Angus Assoc. of America Pioneer Breeder Award 1988

Little League Baseball Coach, 1970

Weaver Union School District Board 1966–1970:

Clerk 1968

Vice President 1970

Merced County Planning Comm. 1964–1988, Chairman 1966–1967

Merced County District #1 Alternate Supervisor 1966–1970

Lone Tree Soil Conservation District:

Director 1957–1986

President 1957–1962

Secretary 1976–87

Eagle Scout Award, 1946

Boy Scouts of America Comm. Member 1969–1970

Boy Scouts Yosemite Area Council Century Club 1978–1988

Central Presbyterian Church 1945–1988  
Usher Comm.

Mercy Hospital Lay Advisory Board 1969–1984

Mercy Hospital Foundation Board 1984–1987, Vice Chairman 1985

Mercy Hospital Governing Board 1987–2005  
Mercy Hospital Charriada Fiesta Benefit

1985 Host & Co-Chairman

Distinguished Eagle Scout Award 1988

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Bert Stephen Crane for his unwavering leadership, and recognizing his accomplishments and contribution. Bert serves as an example of excellence to those in our community.

## NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

**HON. DAVID G. REICHERT**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 29, 2011*

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, each year we recognize November as National Adoption Month. I encourage my colleagues in both chambers to raise awareness about the adoption of young boys and girls in our foster care system who dream of one day having a forever family. Many of us have brothers or sisters, aunts or uncles, sons or daughters, who have lovingly decided to add to their family through adoption. By raising awareness about the many benefits of adoption, and the process for families and children in foster homes, we can make sure more children go to sleep in their own home every night.

According to the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, 423,000 children are living without permanent families in the U.S. Today, 115,000 of these children are eligible for adoption but almost 40% will wait more than 3 years in foster care before being adopted. Every single year—and this number is climbing—over 29,000 of our young people “age-out” of foster care. A child that “ages-out” is more likely to be undereducated, unemployed, homeless, addicted to drugs or alcohol and/or utilizing government benefits to survive, compared to their peers who grew up outside the foster care system or were adopted before aging out. Our children deserve better than this, and the good news is we can help. We can help by encouraging more families to consider adoption, and offering assistance to those who do by extending the adoption tax credit.

Our young people are our greatest treasure. To continue to allow thousands of our young people to begin adulthood at a distinct disadvantage would be devastating. Please consider the plight of so many of our children and young adults living in foster care; shuttled back and forth between homes, towns, cities, schools, friends, support groups, and so on. Children in foster care without a more permanent structure and support system are more likely to distrust adults or have strained relationships with the adults in their lives and with their peers.

National Adoption Month is also an opportunity to recognize the foster parents in our communities who are selflessly giving so much to help our youth. They too deserve our support and our thanks. Foster parents across this nation are wonderful examples for all of us and provide some of our most vulnerable young people with protection and a sense of family and home. I appreciate their sacrifice and I hope they know it does not go unnoticed. The decision to become foster parents or adoptive parents can sometimes be scary; not knowing how one's family dynamics may be impacted or if you'll be able to create a bond with the child and the child with you. To all who may be considering these options today, trust me. I know from personal experience that the worry melts away as soon as you bring that special child into your home. As a foster grandparent, and now a proud grandpa of two adopted children, I can assure you that it won't be long before you realize that it's not just the children who gain so much through adoption. You too gain more joy and more love than you ever could have imagined.

Look for ways that you can get involved with adoption efforts in your local community. Locate adoption services in your community and help with your time, money, or both. Adoption is essential to the health of our nation. Supporting adoptive parents, adoption agencies, and foster parents is a duty for all of us.

## RECOGNIZING THE ABILITYONE PROGRAM

**HON. ADAM SMITH**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 29, 2011*

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the AbilityOne Program, which has helped more than 47,000 blind or significantly disabled Americans develop skills and receive training ultimately leading to successful employment.

The AbilityOne Program harnesses the purchasing power of the federal government to buy products and services from participating community-based non-profit agencies that are dedicated to training and employing individuals with disabilities. This program affords Americans with disabilities the opportunity to acquire job skills and training, receive good wages and benefits, and gain greater independence and a higher quality of life.

I am proud to acknowledge two non-profit agencies, Skookum and Lighthouse for the Blind, both of which are closely associated with AbilityOne in my district. These organizations represent two of many non-profit social enterprises dedicated to the mission of enriching the lives of people with disabilities.

Skookum's mission is to create opportunities for people with disabilities, assisting government customers by delivering critical logistics, facilities maintenance and public works services. Skookum was recently awarded the 2010 National AbilityOne Award for Performance Excellence in Hiring Veterans with Disabilities which demonstrates a proud commitment to recruiting the right person for the right job and bringing Wounded Warriors into our workforce.

Lighthouse for the Blind has been providing employment, support, and training for people who are blind, deaf-blind, and blind with other disabilities in the Puget Sound since 1918. Lighthouse for the Blind expands employment opportunities by providing the technical and communication tools needed for self-sufficiency. The manufacturing operations center makes products for the Federal Government and various aerospace companies.

It is with great pleasure that I extend my support to the AbilityOne Program. The dedication and commitment of Skookum and Lighthouse for the Blind help individuals who are blind or have significant disabilities find employment, live fuller lives, and remain active members of our community. I commend everyone associated with AbilityOne for working to improve so many lives and make our country a better place for all.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE OUTSTANDING PUBLIC SERVICE OF SIX RETIRING OFFICIALS WITHIN USDA'S OFFICE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

**HON. MARK S. CRITZ**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 29, 2011*

Mr. CRITZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the distinguished public service careers of six retiring officers within the Department of Agriculture's Office of Rural Development, RD. These individuals have worked diligently and effectively over many years to promote economic prosperity and safe living in the various rural communities throughout southwestern Pennsylvania. Lambert Rosenbaum, Virginia Stump, Cindy Brandt, Barbara McMillen, Susan O'Donnell, and Mary Ellen Polosky have made clear through the quality of their work at RD that they see a place for rural areas in America's future. These individuals will leave a lasting legacy; their belief in the promise of rural America will surely live on in those who have had the privilege to work with them and manifest itself in all that RD does for the individuals, communities, and businesses of southwestern Pennsylvania for years to come.

Public service has been a calling for each of the six outgoing officials at USDA Rural Development. Lambert Rosenbaum, the outgoing Area Director for the Butler and Westmoreland Area Offices, boasts a 31 year career at USDA. In addition to his civil service, Mr. Rosenbaum served three years of active duty in the Army, during which he served a combat tour in Vietnam and earned the prestigious Bronze Star. He has also served in the Army Reserves for 42 years. Most recently, Mr. Rosenbaum's reserve service took him to Kuwait, where he earned the Meritorious Service Medal. His devotion to the public welfare has clearly made an impression on his children, as two of his sons have served in the Iraq War.

Virginia Stump, a Team Leader and Area Specialist, will leave RD after 30 years of civil service. She has worked extensively on the Water Waste Program, which furnishes rural communities with the means to install sanitary sewers. She has also helped to market several rural development programs, including the Value Added program and the Renewable Energy programs. Ms. Stump is married and has one daughter, as well as twin grandchildren.

Cindy Brant, a Loan Specialist, also has over thirty years of experience in civil service. She began her career with USDA in 1979 as a Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, CETA, Trainee. A year later, she became an Assistant County Supervisor, working out of the Somerset Office until its closure in 2007. While in the Somerset Office, she worked extensively on the Direct Housing Program, helping numerous low-income individuals to purchase homes in rural areas. Upon leaving Somerset, she moved on to the Greensburg Area Office and took on the additional roles of Guaranteed Housing Program Specialist and Multi-Family Housing Program Specialist. In recognition of her outstanding service, Cindy received USDA's Unsung Hero Award in 2009.

In her 28 years with USDA, Barbara McMillen, an Area Specialist, has worked on a